Living To Please God
1 Thessalonians 4:1-10

Objective: Teach and encourage Christians to live in a manner that is pleasing to God.
Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-10.
Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 1:1, “Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God.”

Introduction:
1. Last week I couldn’t get laptop to connect – noticed cable needed to be plugged in. “I knew that”.
2. I learned early on that b’day cards were important to wife. When in neglect now; “I knew that.”
3. We already know how to live in a manner pleasing to God as weel. We may miss some small doctrinal detail, but in general we are without excuse.

We need to live in a way that is pleasing God. (HOW?)
We should already know how to please God, but sometimes we get distracted or confused, and it never hurts to be reminded, so lets review some essentials today about how to live in order to please God.

We need to know and remind ourselves, that living to please God is in fact...

I. Pleasing God is about the very lives we lead.

A. Not a simple list of doctrines to get right.
1. Some times folks think we have the right doctrine, so they are all set and done. Finished.
2. I got baptized in 1980, so there is nothing more to think about or worry about. I’m done.
3. It is not about a list of 5 or ten things to believe right about and you are done.
4. It is NOT a matter of knowing the right thing to practice in regard to mechanical instruments of music in worship services. It is NOT about knowing who is qualified or not qualified to serve as elder. Or even getting to church on Sunday.
5. Doctrines are important. 1 Timothy 4:16, “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” But its not about a simple list of right rituals, procedures or policies. Right doctrine includes the very heart we carry, the very spirit we nurture. Right doctrine involves thinking, acting and feeling like Christ. Being continually transformed until we do.

B. It is about the very orientation of your life!
1. 24-7, 365 days a year, for the rest of your life. No vacations.
2. Not just on Sunday, but every day and every breath and every thought you take.
3. It is about Who really owns your life? It is about constantly asking what does God really prefer me to do right now, then with no excuses, doing it. Otherwise, He is not really Lord. You are deceiving yourself.
4. What is the purpose, the focus, the very goal of your life?
5. What is your LIFE like to make it pleasing to God?
6. What are your natural impulses and desires? What motivates the way you talk to your wife or your neighbor? What you actually do with your day – at work or day off; does it belong to God?
7. What makes you decide how to spend your day? What you will do or not do? What are the governing, overriding principles and motives that move you?

C. It is about the actual priorities of your life.
1. Does anything compete with God for your thoughts?
2. What would take priority over doing God’s will? (If God says to not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, such as it the habit of some, what would displace God as a priority so that you did not come to church services and other assemblies? Your liking or not liking certain people? You desire to do your hobby? The need to get your lawn mowed? How important is God’s word to you if any such thing is allowed to take priority over what God says we should do?
4. How does leisure time fit in with how you live pleasing to God?
5. How does employment fit in with how your life pleases God?

**Being pleasing to God is in fact, very much**

**II. Pleasing God is about “sanctification”**.

A. Are you really set aside for God’s special use?
1. **Sanctification;**
   - Is a reserved-ness. Like the utensils in the Temple – ONLY for use in serving God.
2. Are you mostly about yourself and your desires?
3. Do you squeeze God in and take some time to do church stuff, or are you reserved for Him always, as top priority?
4. Do you use you for other, “unclean” things, or are you reserved for God in everything you do?

B. Holiness should show up in godly love for your brother.
1. Are you able to avoid sexual immorality? How might we offend our brothers in this regard?
2. Perhaps with our thoughts and our eyes, especially as men. How do you gain control of this?
3. Here is a passage that has been a lot of help to me in this regard; if you will meditate on it. **Job 31:1-4**, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. For what is man's lot from God above, his heritage from the Almighty on high? Is it not ruin for the wicked, disaster for those who do wrong? Does he not see my ways and count my every step?"
4. **Job 31:9-11** is also part of it and convicting; "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, then may my wife grind another man's grain, and may other men sleep with her. For that would have been shameful, a sin to be judged."
5. What is it to "lurk"? To "lurk" at my neighbor’s door? Is this not anywhere you might pause in hope of a glimpse at his naked wife? Including a magazine photo or to dwell on a skirt walking doe the sidewalk - one that will someday belong to you neighbor, not to you??!!
6. What other ways might you yield to passionate lust like “heathens” do?
7. If you are looking at porno, flirting with temptations, you are “lurking”.

C. This includes self control and discipline.
1. **1 Thessalonians 4:4**, “...each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable,...”
2. This means, no unwholesome words. “I hate you”.
3. No derogatory remarks.
4. No outbursts of anger, no yielding to irritations.

Another aspect that stands out here, and which we should not neglect of forget, is that

**II. Pleasing God entails continued effort to improve.**

A. Right hearts seek to please more and more.
1. If He is really Lord, one is not satisfied with being simply adequate.
2. Just as you are doing, but also do so more and more is a common theme.
   - **1 Thessalonians 4:1**. “...we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.”
   - **1 Thessalonians 4:10**. “...in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.”
   - **1 Thessalonians 5:11**. “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (But keep doing it, keep doing it...)
3. One brother constantly complained that we should not encourage to do better because we were adequate in Christ. We had the right doctrine and we were safe and should just be made to feel good about it. He has truth, but then again, he doesn’t because the teaching of lives pleasing to God keep trying harder and harder; increasing faith, increasing devotion, increasing holiness and sanctification.
B. Involves personal effort and personal application.
   1. Each is personally, individually responsible.
   2. Grow in Christian virtues. 
      2 Peter 1:5-8, “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Note the “increasing measure”, who is to do it!
   3. Out of love for God and desire to please Him, we need to apply ourselves with ever increasing measure.
   4. This should not be dis-heartening, should be the desire of love if we love with all our heart, all our strength. If loving God is first and foremost commandment and we are earnestly applying ourselves to that one.
   5. Someone contended recently that we should be telling each other that we are adequate, that we are fine, that we don’t need to worry, that we need to stop urging each other to try harder. He was wrong!!!!

C. God’s help is also a necessary part.
   1. We can and should try, but we can’t really achieve it on our own. We need God’s help.
   2. 1 Thessalonians 3:13, “May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”
   3. 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” That is what He gives us His Spirit for; to enable us, to sanctify us, to help us.
   4. Seek God’s help. Earnestly, sincerely, with prayer, with obedient compliance to His words.

So What?:
   My wife handles it well when I neglect to show my love by getting an appropriate birthday card. But it is embarrassing for me to admit that she would have liked a thoughtful card and “I knew that”.
   When I stand before God on judgment day, there may be some things I was ignorant of, but I do not intend to be standing there shaking my head saying, “I knew that”.
   I want to urge each of us that we already know more than we are really doing. Let’s renew our intention, let’s renew our effort. We have already been instructed, we already know how. Let’s make sure we live in order to please God.

Closing Prayer:
Living To Please God
1 Thessalonians 4:1-10

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-10.

Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 1:1
“F, b, w_i_y_h_t_l_o_t_p_G,”

We need to live in a way that is pleasing God.
Essentials about how to live in order to please God.

I. **Pleasing God is about the very lives we lead.**
   A. Not a simple list of doctrines to get right.
      1 Timothy 4:16
   
   B. It is about the very orientation of your life!
   
   C. It is about the actual priorities of your life.

II. **Pleasing God is about “sanctification”.**
   A. Are you really set aside for God’s special use?
   
   B. Holiness should show up in godly love for your brother.
      Job 31:1-4       Job 31:9-11
   
   C. This includes self control and discipline.
      1 Thessalonians 4:4

II. **Pleasing God entails continued effort to improve.**
   A. Right hearts seek to please more and more.
      1 Thessalonians 4:1       1 Thessalonians 4:10       1 Thessalonians 5:11
   
   B. Involves personal effort and personal application.
      2 Peter 1:5-8
   
   C. God’s help is also a necessary part.
      1 Thessalonians 3:13       1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

**So What?:**
Let’s make sure we live in order to please God.